Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-29. Canceled

30. (Currently Amended) A process for decorating the cylindrical wall of a plurality of containers comprising:

a) mounting a plurality of moving mandrels on a loop circuit, each mandrel being mounted on a support capable of moving such that the axis of the mandrel remains parallel to a given direction D, and able to rotate around its axis while resisting a force exerted perpendicular to the axis;

b) successively bringing each of the plurality of containers flush with one of the plurality of mandrels and fitting the container onto the mandrel;

c) bringing the mandrel thus covered with the container into the vicinity of an impression roll driven in a continuous rotary motion around a fixed axis, wherein the impression roll is a marking roll provided with an etched surface;

d) rotating the mandrel around its axis while it is being moved towards the impression roll,

e) running a transfer film bearing strip into the gap between the impression roll and the mandrel covered with the container at a linear velocity equal to the tangential velocities of the roll and container;

f) bringing the mandrel and the impression roll into contact with each other, the cylindrical wall of the container and the surface of the impression roll being driven at a substantially equal tangential velocity, the contact translating into a force exerted by the impression roll on the mandrel through the transfer ~~transferable~~ film bearing strip and the wall of the container;

g) moving the transfer film bearing strip away from the surface of the container, with the result that the part of the transfer film remaining bonded to the container wall is detached from the transfer film bearing strip, thus bringing about the decoration; and

h) moving the mandrel covered with the ~~and~~ container ~~unit~~ away from the impression roll to leave room for the next mandrel.

31. Canceled

32. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 30 ~~31~~ wherein the force applied by the raised parts of the etched surface causes the compression of a part of the transfer film which thins out and adheres to the wall of the cylindrical container and, when the transfer film bearing strip is moved away from the surface of the container, the marked part of the transfer film which remains bonded to the container wall is detached from the transfer film bearing strip, thereby bringing about the decoration being implemented.

33. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 30 ~~31~~ wherein the marking roll is hot and the transfer film is a thermal transfer film.

34. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 33 wherein, when the transfer film bearing strip has left the marking area because of the rotation of the mandrel, the transfer film bearing strip is held against the cylindrical wall of the container long enough to allow the transfer film bearing strip and the marked transfer film to cool down to a temperature that makes the film easier to detach by cutting along the boundary between the marked area and the unmarked area.

35. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 30 wherein the mandrels are mounted on a turntable, the axis of rotation of which is parallel to the axes of the mandrels.

36. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 35 wherein the turntable operates stepwise, the mandrel finding itself at each stop flush with an area for handling or treating the container.

37. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 30 wherein the mandrel is made to rotate such that it is able to reach the appropriate velocity before being brought into contact with the impression roll ~~it reaches the marking area~~.

38. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 37 wherein the impression roll rotates

at a constant speed of rotation.

39. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 30 ~~31~~ wherein the position of the axis of the marking roll is defined relative to the trajectory of the mandrels such that when they come into contact with each other, a force is applied to a ~~the contact~~ generatrix line of the container wall that is weak enough for the mandrel to be able to resist mechanically and strong enough for the transfer film to be marked by the raised parts of the etched surface of the roll.

40. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 33 wherein the container comprises a cylindrical body having is a flexible tube, the cylindrical skirt of which has a thickness of between 250 and 600 microns, the marking temperature required by the hot stamping roll is between 80 and 250°C and the support force of the roll on the mandrel is between 2 N/mm and 40 N/mm.

41. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 33 wherein the transfer film bearing strip is held, after marking, against the cylindrical wall of the container over an aperture angle α over 20°.

42. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 33 wherein the transfer film bearing strip is held, after marking, against the cylindrical wall of the container until the surface of the container reaches an average temperature below 80°C.

43. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 33 wherein a drive device of the transfer film bearing strip is mounted downstream from the marking area such that the tension of the transfer film bearing strip is as low as possible as it leaves the marking area.

44. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 33 wherein, during marking, a device driving the transfer film bearing strip is moved so that it enters the trajectory of the mandrels allowing the transfer film bearing strip to be applied against the container wall, the contact being maintained over an angular aperture over 30°.

45. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 33 wherein a cold air flow is circulated over the transfer film bearing strip as it leaves the marking area.

46. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 30 ~~31~~ wherein, after fitting the container onto the mandrel, and beginning rotation of the mandrel, an optical determination is made of a pre-marked index on the container using an optical tracking device, and the rotation of the mandrel is calculated such that the cylindrical wall of the container comes into contact with the marking roll surface by presenting itself according to a preset angular position, with a tangential velocity substantially equal to the tangential velocity of the etched surface of the marking roll.

47. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 46, wherein the optical tracking device allowing the optical determination of a pre-marked index of the decoration is complemented by a second optical device connected to a corrective information system, which through the use of image analysis software, allows the angular and axial position of the mandrel to be corrected.

48-51. (Canceled)

52. (Currently Amended) A process for decorating the cylindrical walls of a plurality of containers comprising:

a) mounting a plurality of moving mandrels on a loop circuit, each mandrel having a diameter slightly less than the diameter of the cylindrical wall of the container and being mounted on a support capable of moving such that the axis of the mandrel remains parallel to a given direction D, the mandrel being mounted onto its support in such a way that it is able to rotate around its axis while resisting a force exerted perpendicular to the axis;
b) successively bringing each of the plurality of containers flush with one of the plurality of mandrels and fitting the container onto the mandrel;
c) printing the cylindrical wall of each container in accordance with the required decoration with an ink or varnish promoting the adhesion of a transfer film;

d) bringing the mandrel thus covered with the container into the vicinity of an impression roll, the roll being driven in a continuous rotary motion around a fixed axis parallel to the direction D;

e) rotating the mandrel while it is being moved towards the impression roll at a speed correlated with that of the impression roll such that when the mandrel comes to be flush with the impression roll, the tangential velocity of the container wall in rotation is substantially equal to the tangential velocity of the surface of the impression roll;

f) running a transfer film bearing strip into the gap between the impression roll and the mandrel, such that when it arrives in the gap, the transfer film bearing strip is moving at a linear velocity substantially equal to the circumferential velocities of the impression roll and the mandrel;

g) bringing the mandrel and the impression roll into contact with each other, the contact translating into a force exerted by the impression roll on the mandrel through the transfer film bearing strip and the cylindrical wall of the container, the force causing the compression of the transfer film, translating into an adhesion of a part of the transfer film to the printed part of the cylindrical container wall;

h) moving the transfer film bearing strip away from the surface of the container, with the result that the part of the transfer film remaining bonded to the container wall is detached from the transfer film bearing strip, thus bringing about the decoration, wherein the cylindrical wall of each container is printed in accordance with the required decoration with an ink or varnish promoting the rejection of the transfer film and that, when the mandrel and the impression roll are brought into contact with each other, the contact translates into a force exerted by the impression roll on the mandrel through the transfer film bearing strip and the cylindrical wall of the container, the force causing the compression of the transfer film, translating into an adhesion of a part of the transfer film to the unprinted part of the cylindrical wall; and

i) moving the mandrel covered with the ~~and~~ container ~~unit~~ away from the roll in order to leave room for the next mandrel.

53. (Canceled)

54. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 52 ~~53~~ wherein the transfer film has adhesive properties.

55. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 54 wherein the impression roll is hot with the result that when the impression roll leans against the container wall ~~sleeve~~ through the transfer film, the latter acquires the adhesive properties.

56. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 30 wherein the impression roll is driven by a motor.

57. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 56 wherein the motor is an electric motor.

58. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 30 wherein the mandrel has a diameter slightly less than the diameter of the cylindrical wall of the container.

59. (Canceled)

60. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 33 wherein the transfer film bearing strip is held, after marking, against the cylindrical wall of the container over an aperture angle α over 30°.

61. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 33 wherein the transfer film bearing strip is held, after marking, against the cylindrical wall of the container until the surface of the container reaches an average temperature below 60°C.

62. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 47, wherein the second optical device is a video camera.

63-65. (Canceled)